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**Demographic Differences in Arts Attendance:  
1982-1992**

The 1992 Survey on Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) indicates that arts participation rates vary for different demographic groups. Examining four demographic variables (gender, race, age, and education) allows us to identify significant differences in arts participation. The 1992 SPPA clearly finds education the strongest demographic characteristic impacting participation in all the arts activities examined.

The 1992 survey provides information on demographic variables of public participants in the arts for the three areas covered in Research Division Note #50--via Attendance at Arts Events, via Broadcast and Recorded Media, and through Personal Performance and Creation. Note #50 provided information on both the percentage of the adult population participating in the arts (arts participation rate) and the numbers of adults participating in these three ways. This Note will concentrate on the differences in the rate of participation through attendance at arts activities by demographic variables, while Note #52 will provide information on audience numbers and the demographics of arts participants through Broadcast and Recorded Media.

These 1992 SPPA results may be compared to results from the 1982 and 1985 SPPAs. Such comparison allows us to identify trends in arts participation by various demographic groups throughout the decade.

**BACKGROUND:**

The most comprehensive national survey on arts participation, SPPA 1992 expands our understanding of who participates in which arts activities and how frequently. Conducted by the US Bureau of the Census, it collects

Arts in Education

Challenge &  
Advancement

Dance

Design Arts

Expansion Arts

Folk Arts

International

Literature

Locals

Media Arts

Museum

Music

Opera/Musical  
Theater

Presenting &  
Commissioning

State & Regional

Theater

Visual Arts

data in household surveys of approximately 1,000 adults per month for a period of 12 months. Jack Faucett Associates in cooperation with Sociology Professor John P. Robinson of the University of Maryland prepared a summary report of the survey results. This report, Arts Participation in America: 1982-1992, is available from the Research Division as Research Report #27.

As part of the survey, data were collected on gender, race, age, and education. Information gathered in 1992 may also be compared to that in the 1982 SPPA to identify trends in the demographic composition of arts audiences. Some new questions were added in the 1992 SPPA as were revisions to ones asked in 1982 or 1985. For instance, more questions related to dance and literature participation were added, as were media questions relating to the use of videocassette recorders for arts program viewing.

Regarding the 1992 participation rates for different demographic groups, it is important to note that the overall attendance rates discussed at the beginning of each paragraph have not been statistically adjusted to account for other intervening variables. Statistical adjustment or multiple classification analysis (MCA) would separate the statistical effects of many variables that relate to a "dependant" variable. For example, in terms of race, whites and blacks have overall attendance rates for the seven principle arts activities measured of 42% and 35% respectively. These two groups have different education and income levels as well as age and gender profiles. If these factors are statistically adjusted to account for these differences (education, income, etc.), participation rates for whites and blacks would be the same (41% for each group). (See Research Division Report #25.)

#### ATTENDANCE AND DEMOGRAPHICS:

Attendance at the arts events examined in the SPPA clearly varies by demographics, particularly one's education level. Based on earlier analyses of SPPA data, education is the strongest factor. SPPA 1992 indicates a 10%--32% greater attendance rate for college educated adults above the 41% mean for the overall population. Similarly, the greatest percentage below the mean is among those with less than a high school education (23%--28%). By contrast, attendance rates for gender only vary by about 3% above and below the mean. Attendance is higher among women than men, higher among middle aged and younger adults than among the old, and higher among

whites than other racial groups. The overlap of audiences is greatest for opera and classical music; nevertheless, there are common patterns across attendance at all arts activities. Thus, audiences for music have similar demographic characteristics to those for dance.

**Gender:** In 1992 the overall rates of attendance at arts events were higher among women (42%) than among men (40%). The only exception was attendance at jazz performances at which men were 2.5% more likely than women to attend (See Table 1, section 1). Otherwise, the higher attendance rates among women range from .2% at opera performances (3.5% for females and 3.3% for males) to 4.5% at musicals (19.6% for females and 15.1% for males).

Between 1982 and 1992 the greatest change for both male and female attendance rates occurred in art museums (up 5.5% for males and 3.8% for females) and at jazz performances (up 1.6% for males and .4% for females). Most significantly similar were male and female attendance at plays (up 1.6% for males and 1.7% for females). Demographic trends by gender over the decade for each art discipline indicates (see Table 3, section 1):

Jazz -- Male attendance increased 1.6%, from 10.3% to 11.9%. Female attendance went up .4%, from 9.0% to 9.4%.

Classical Music -- Male attendance increased .2%, from 11.3% to 11.5%. Female attendance fell 1.1%, from 14.5% to 13.4%.

Opera -- Male attendance increased .6%, from 2.7% to 3.3%. Female attendance increased .2%, from 3.3% to 3.5%.

Musicals -- Male attendance decreased 1.5%, from 16.6% to 15.1%. Female attendance fell .9%, from 20.5% to 19.6%.

Plays -- Male attendance increased 1.6%, from 10.7% to 12.3%. Female attendance increased 1.7%, from 12.9% to 14.6%.

Ballet -- Male attendance increased .9%, from 2.7% to 3.6%. Female attendance increased less significantly, up only .1%, from 5.5% to 5.6%.

Art Museums -- Male attendance increased 5.5%, from 21.0% to 26.5%. Female attendance increased 3.8%, from 23.1% to 26.9%.

Reading Literature -- Male participation fell 1.7%, from 48.9% to 47.2%. Female participation fell by 2.8%, from 63% to 60.2%.

**Race:** In 1992 whites were more likely than others to attend arts performances. The overall attendance rates were 42% for whites, 35% for blacks, and 37% for other races. Whites reported the highest attendance rates at the most arts events: classical music (13.2%), musicals (18.1%), plays (13.8%), and reading literature (55.6%). (See Table 1, section 2). Other races reported the highest rates at opera (4.7%), ballet (5.5%), and art museums (28.6%). Only in jazz did blacks attain the highest level of attendance (16.25%).

Throughout the decade attendance by whites remained the most stable. The largest change for this group was a greater increase in attendance at art museums (4.4%). Blacks increased their attendance 6.4% at plays, 6.8% at art museums, and 4.2% at musicals. Respondents of other races showed an increase of 2.5% at classical music, but dropped 3% in attendance at jazz and 8.6% in reading literature. Blacks also showed increases in both attendance at musicals (4.2%) and reading literature (3.3%), while whites and other races reported declining rates in these two areas. Demographic trends by race over the decade in each discipline include (see Table 3, section 2):

Jazz -- Attendance was up 1.2% for whites (from 8.9% to 10.1%), .8% for blacks (from 15.4% to 16.2%), and down 3% for others (from 8.5% to 5.5%).

Classical Music -- Attendance decreased .7% for whites (from 13.9% to 13.2%), and increased .2% for blacks (from 6.7% to 6.9%) and 2.5% for others (from 9.5% to 12%).

Opera -- Attendance increased .2% for whites (from 3.2% to 3.4%), .6% for blacks (from 1.3% to 1.9%), and 1.6% for others (from 3.1% to 4.7%).

Musicals -- Attendance fell by 1.6% for whites (from 19.7% to 18.1%) and 2.3% for others (from 13.2% to 10.9%); but increased 4.2% for blacks (from 10% to 14.2%).

Plays -- Attendance increased 1.1% for whites (from 12.7% to 13.8%), 6.4% for blacks (from 5.8% to 12.2%), and 1.7% for others (from 8% to 9.7%).

Ballet -- Attendance increased .4% for whites (from 4.5% to 4.9%), .9% for blacks (from 1.8% to 2.7%), and 2% for others (from 3.5% to 5.5%).

Art Museums -- Attendance increased 4.4% for whites (from 23.2% to 27.6%), 6.8% for blacks (from 12.4% to 19.2%), and 1.2% for others (from 27.4% to 28.6%).

Reading literature -- Reading increased 3.3% for blacks (from 42% to 45.3%); and decreased 2.7% for whites (from 58.3% to 55.6%) and 8.6% for others (from 50.1% to 41.5%).

**Age:** The 1992 SPPA indicates between 40-45% attendance rates among adults between 18-64 years of age. Peak attendance of 45% occurred at arts events for the 45-54 age group. This is higher than the average attendance rate of 41% for the overall adult population. The main decline in attendance rates was for those 65 years and older, whose overall attendance was 37% for the 65-74 age group and only 20% for those over 75.

Between 1982 and 1992, 18-24 year olds report the greatest declines in attending jazz (-6.2%) and reading literature (-6.8%), but also report increases in attending plays (2.5%) and visiting art museums (6%). Baby Boomers, 25-44 years of age, report the greatest attendance increase at jazz (4.9% among 35-44 year olds) and at art museums (2.9% for the 25-34 age group and 2.6% for the 35-44 age group). Baby Boomers also experienced a significant decrease in reading literature (7.7% for 25-34 year olds) and decreases in attendance at musicals (down 3.8%--4.6%) and classical music (down 2.9%--4%). Adults born during the Depression Era, 45-64 years of age, had the greatest increases in visits to art museums (between 5.8% and 7.3%) and attendance at both jazz performances and plays (between 3.4% and 3.8%). This group experienced increases in all disciplines except reading literature (down .2% among 55-64 year olds). Those aged 65--older, born before the Depression Era, recorded growth among the 65-74 age group in attending

jazz (4.5%) and visiting art museums (5.8%). However, the 75--older age group recorded decreases of .1%--.6% in attendance at musicals, opera, and reading literature and slower increases (between .3% and 2%) in all other disciplines. Demographic trends by age over the decade in each discipline include (see Table 3, section 3):

Jazz -- Decreases in the 18-24 age group (-6.2%, down from 17.5% to 11.3%) and 25-34 age group (-1%, down from 14.5% to 13.5%). The most significant increases occurred among adults in the 35-44 age group (up 4.9%, from 7.8% to 12.7%) and 65-74 age group (up 4.5%, from 2% to 6.5%).

Classical Music -- Decreases occurred for the youngest adults, ages 18-24, (-.7%, from 11% to 10.3%) and Baby Boomers (down between -2.9%, from 13% to 10.1% for those 25 to 34 and -4%, from 16.4% to 12.4% for those 35-44). Increases were reported by Depression Era adults, 45-64, (up between 2% for those 45-54, from 14.8% to 16.8%, and 2.5% for those 55-64, from 12.8% to 15.3%) and Pre-Depression Era adults, 65-older, (up between 1.9% for those 65-74, from 12.1% to 14%, and 1.3% for those over 75, from 7.1% to 8.4%).

Opera -- Small decreases occurred for the 35-44 age group (-.3%, from 3.6% to 3.3%) and the 75-older age group (-.3%, from 2% to 1.7%). Slight increases of between .1% and .7% occurred for all other age groups (+.7% for those 18-24, from 2% to 2.7%; +.1% for the 25-34 group, from 2.6% to 2.7%; +.3% for the 45-54 group, from 3.9% to 4.2%; +.5% for the 55-64 group, from 3.5% to 4%; and +.6% for the 65-74 group, from 3.4% to 4%).

Musicals -- The largest decreases were among Baby Boomers (down between 3.8%, from 19.8% to 16% for those 25-34, and 4.6%, from 23.1% to 18.5% for the 35-44 group). The oldest and youngest groups also experienced a decline of .1%--1% (down from 8.9% to 8.8% for those 75-older and down from 16.6% to 15.6% for 18-24 year olds). Increases occurred for Depression Era adults (between .5%, from 18.7% to 19.2% for the 55-64 group, and 1.1%, from 21.3% to 22.4% for 45-54 year olds) and the 65-74 age group (up 2.9%, from 13.9% to 16.8%).

Plays -- Only the Baby Boomers experiences a slight decrease in the 35-44 age group (-1.4%, from 15.3% to 13.9% for those aged 35-44). Increases ranged from 1.5% (from 5.2% to 6.7%) for the 75-older group and 2.5% (from 10.7% to 13.2%) for 18-24 year olds to 3.4%-3.8% for all other groups (from 9.9% to 13.3% for those 65-74; from 11.5% to 14.9% for those 55-64, and from 13.4% to 17.2% for 45-54 year olds).

Ballet -- Increases of between .3% and 1.4% were recorded for all age groups (up .3% for those 75-older, from 1.6% to 1.9%; up 1.1% for those 65-74, from 3% to 4.1%; up 1.1% for those 55-65, from 3.7% to 4.8%; and up 1.4% for those 18-24, from 3.9% to 5.3%), except 25-34 year olds who experienced no change and 35-44 year olds who reported a 1.1% decline (down from 6% to 4.9%).

Art Museums -- This discipline marked the most significant increases across the board. Increases ranged from 2% among the 75-older group to 7.3% for 45-54 year olds (up 6% for those 18-24, from 22.7% to 28.7%; up 2.9% for those 25-34, from 26.5% to 29.4%; up 2.6% for those 35-44, from 27.1% to 29.7%; up 7.3% for those 45-54, from 22% to 29.3%; up 5.8% for those 55-64, from 18.9% to 24.7%; up 5.8% for those 65-74, from 14.6% to 20.4%; and up 2% for those 75-older, from 8.3% to 10.3%).

Reading Literature -- The most significant decreases occurred among younger age groups, with 18-24 year olds down 6.8% (from 59.8% to 53%) and 25-34 year olds down 7.7% (from 62.1% to 54.4%). Increases were reported only among 45-54 year olds (1.8%, from 54.9% to 56.7%) and those 65-74 (3.1%, from 47.3% to 50.4%).

**Education:** As was the case in 1982 and 1985, education had the strongest correlation of any demographic factor in arts attendance. Seventy-seven percent of those with graduate degrees and only 8% of those with only a grade school education attended arts events in 1992. Educated adults show much higher participation rates in all categories (see Table 1, section 4).

The decade between 1982 and 1992 marks the greatest declines in attendance at musicals (down 1.1%--7.7%), classical music performances (down .1%--6.5%) and reading

literature (down 3.8%--9.4%) by adults across all education levels. The greatest increases were in jazz attendance and visits to art museums among the college and graduate school educated (up 1.1%--5% for jazz and up 2.3%--3.4% for art museums). There were also declines among the highly educated in reading literature; however, their level of participation remained significantly higher than those less educated. For instance, college graduates recorded a 9.4% drop in reading literature yet still recorded a 70.5% rate of participation in 1992; whereas, adults with a grade school education recorded a 17.2% rate of reading literature in 1992, down 3.8% from the 1982 rate of 21%. Demographic trends by education over the decade in each discipline include (see Table 3, section 4):

Jazz -- Rates of participation increased in direct proportion to greater education levels. Both the highest rates of participation and the greatest increases occurred in the college and graduate school educated groups (increases of between 1.1%, from 19.2% to 20.3% for college graduates, and 5%, from 19.6% to 24.6% for the graduate educated). Adults with a grade school education also experienced a slight decrease of .7%, from 1.4% to .7%. Decreases were recorded for those with some high school (down 1.8%, from 4.1% to 2.3%), high school graduates (down 1.2%, from 6.8% to 5.6%), and some college (down .7%, from 14.9% to 14.2%).

Classical Music -- Within the discipline, rates of participation increased as education levels increased. However, all age groups experienced a decline in attendance rates, with the smallest decrease occurring among adults with a grade school education (-.1%, from 1.9% to 1.8%) and the largest decrease occurring among college graduates (-6.5%, from 29.4% to 22.9%).

Opera -- Basic participation rates increased as education levels increased. There were increases across the decade of between .1% (from .5% to .6%) for the grade school educated and 1.4% (from 10.2% to 11.6%) for the graduate school educated. Decreases of between .5% and 1.1% occurred for high school graduates (down from 1.9% to 1.4%) and adults with some college (down from 3.8% to 3.3%) or a college degree (down from 6.6% to 5.5%).

Musicals -- Participation rates increased at greater levels than for jazz, opera, or ballet in proportion to higher education levels. Across the decade, there were decreases in all education levels, ranging from -1.1% (from 6.1% to 5%) for those with some high school to -7.7% (from 37.4% to 29.7%) for college graduates.

Plays -- Participation rates increased in proportion to higher education levels. There were rate increases among those with lower levels of education (between .1%, from 1.7% to 1.8%, for the grade school educated and .8%, from 7% to 7.8%, for high school graduates) and decreases for those with higher education levels. The greatest decrease occurred among college graduates (-2.7%, from 25.9% to 23.2%).

Ballet -- Participation rates increased in proportion to higher education levels. Increases over the decade occurred for adults with grade school education (.2%, from .4% to .6%), some high school (.6%, from .8% to 1.4%), and some college (.1%, from 5.9% to 6%). Decreases occurred for high school graduates (-.3%, from 2.4% to 2.1%), college graduates (-.7%, from 9.7% to 9%), and the graduate school educated (-1.5%, from 13.2% to 11.7%).

Art Museums -- Higher education levels again correspond to higher participation rates. There were increases for all education levels except the group with some high school, which dropped .1%, from 7.2% to 7.1%, in attendance. Increases range from .3%, from 16.1% to 16.4%, for high school graduates to 3.4%, from 55.9% to 59.3%, for the graduate school educated.

Reading Literature -- Participation rates are highest overall for this form of art participation and increase in proportion to education levels. Over the decade, however, adults in all education levels reported decreases in reading literature. Rates dropped between 9.4%, from 79.9% to 70.5%, for college graduates and 3.8%, from 21% to 17.2%, for the grade school educated.

**TABLE 1: 1992 ATTENDANCE RATES\* FOR ARTS ACTIVITIES BY DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS**

	<u>Adult Population (Millions)</u>	<u>Jazz</u>	<u>Classical Music</u>	<u>Opera</u>	<u>Musicals</u>	<u>Plays</u>	<u>Ballet</u>	<u>Art Museums</u>	<u>Reading Literature</u>
Grand Mean:	185.8	10.6	12.5	3.3	17.4	13.5	4.7	26.7	54.0
<b>Gender:</b>									
Male	89.0	11.9	11.5	3.3	15.1	12.3	3.6	26.5	47.2
Female	96.8	9.4	13.4	3.5	19.6	14.6	5.6	26.9	60.2
<b>Race:</b>									
White	158.8	10.1	13.2	3.4	18.1	13.8	4.9	27.6	55.6
Black	21.1	16.2	6.9	1.9	14.2	12.2	2.7	19.2	45.3
Other	5.9	5.5	12.0	4.7	10.9	9.7	5.5	28.6	41.5
<b>Age:</b>									
18-24	24.1	11.3	10.3	2.7	15.6	13.2	5.3	28.7	53.0
25-34	42.4	13.5	10.1	2.7	16.0	12.2	4.8	29.4	54.4
35-44	39.8	12.7	12.4	3.3	18.5	13.9	4.9	29.7	58.8
45-54	27.7	10.8	16.8	4.2	22.4	17.2	5.0	29.3	56.7
55-64	21.2	8.3	15.3	4.0	19.2	14.9	4.8	24.7	52.7
65-74	18.3	6.5	14.0	4.0	16.8	13.3	4.1	20.4	50.4
75-older	12.3	2.2	8.4	1.7	8.8	6.7	1.9	10.3	40.2
<b>Education:</b>									
Grade School	14.3	.7	1.8	.6	3.0	1.8	.6	3.7	17.2
Some High School	18.6	2.3	2.9	.8	5.0	3.7	1.4	7.1	31.8
High School Grad	69.4	5.6	6.5	1.4	11.9	7.8	2.1	16.4	48.8
Some College	39.2	14.2	14.0	3.3	21.4	15.9	6.0	34.5	64.7
College Grad	26.2	20.3	22.9	5.5	29.7	23.2	9.0	46.4	70.5
Graduate School	18.1	24.6	35.6	11.6	37.3	35.4	11.7	59.3	79.2

\* "Attendance Rate" is used synonymously with "participation rate" in this Research Division Note. An attendance or participation rate is the percentage of the adult population that indicated attending an arts event (or visiting an art museum, etc.) at least once in the last 12 months divided by the adult population.

Source: US Bureau of the Census 1992 Survey on Public Participation in the Arts.

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**TABLE 2: 1982 ATTENDANCE RATES\* FOR ARTS ACTIVITIES BY DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS**

	<u>Adult Population (Millions)</u>	<u>Jazz</u>	<u>Classical Music</u>	<u>Opera</u>	<u>Musicals</u>	<u>Plays</u>	<u>Ballet</u>	<u>Art Museums</u>	<u>Reading Literature</u>
Grand Mean:	170	9.6	13.0	3.0	18.6	11.9	4.2	22.1	56.4
<b>Gender:</b>									
Male	80	10.3	11.3	2.7	16.6	10.7	2.7	21.0	48.9
Female	90	9.0	14.5	3.3	20.5	12.9	5.5	23.1	63.0
<b>Race:</b>									
White	146	8.9	13.9	3.2	19.7	12.7	4.5	23.2	58.3
Black	17	15.4	6.7	1.3	10.0	5.8	1.8	12.4	42.0
Other	7	8.5	9.5	3.1	13.2	8.0	3.5	27.4	50.1
<b>Age:</b>									
18-24	26	17.5	11.0	2.0	16.6	10.7	3.9	22.7	59.8
25-34	40	14.5	13.0	2.6	19.8	12.2	4.8	26.5	62.1
35-44	30	7.8	16.4	3.6	23.1	15.3	6.0	27.1	59.6
45-54	25	7.0	14.8	3.9	21.3	13.4	3.7	22.0	54.9
55-64	23	4.9	12.8	3.5	18.7	11.5	3.7	18.9	52.9
65-74	16	2.0	12.1	3.4	13.9	9.9	3.0	14.6	47.3
75-older	9	1.4	7.1	2.0	8.9	5.2	1.6	8.3	40.8
<b>Education:</b>									
Grade School	20	1.4	1.9	0.5	4.2	1.7	0.4	2.7	21.0
Some High School	22	4.1	3.9	0.5	6.1	3.5	0.8	7.2	39.0
High School Grad	65	6.8	7.6	1.9	13.3	7.0	2.4	16.1	54.2
Some College	32	14.9	17.9	3.8	26.1	16.4	5.9	32.5	73.1
College Grad	19	19.2	29.4	6.6	37.4	25.9	9.7	44.1	79.9
Graduate School	12	19.6	38.5	10.2	44.9	36.3	13.2	55.9	85.1

\* See footnote on Table 1.

Source: US Bureau of the Census 1992 Survey on Public Participation in the Arts.

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**TABLE 3: 1982-1992 DIFFERENCES IN ARTS ATTENDANCE RATES\* BY DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS**

	<u>Jazz</u>	<u>Classical Music</u>	<u>Opera</u>	<u>Musicals</u>	<u>Plays</u>	<u>Ballet</u>	<u>Art Museums</u>	<u>Reading Literature</u>
<b>Gender:</b>								
Male	+1.6	+ .2	+ .6	-1.5	+1.6	+ .9	+5.5	-1.7
Female	+ .4	-1.1	+ .2	- .9	+1.7	+ .1	+3.8	-2.8
<b>Race:</b>								
White	+1.2	- .7	+ .2	-1.6	+1.1	+ .4	+4.4	-2.7
Black	+ .8	+ .2	+ .6	+4.2	+6.4	+ .9	+6.8	+3.3
Other	-3.0	+2.5	+1.6	-2.3	+1.7	+2.0	+1.2	-8.6
<b>Age:</b>								
18-24	-6.2	- .7	+ .7	-1.0	+2.5	+1.4	+6.0	-6.8
25-34	-1.0	-2.9	+ .1	-3.8	0	0	+2.9	-7.7
35-44	+4.9	-4.0	- .3	-4.6	-1.4	-1.1	+2.6	- .8
45-54	+3.8	+2.0	+ .3	+1.1	+3.8	+1.3	+7.3	+1.8
55-64	+3.4	+2.5	+ .5	+ .5	+3.4	+1.1	+5.8	- .2
65-74	+4.5	+1.9	+ .6	+2.9	+3.4	+1.1	+5.8	+3.1
75-older	+ .8	+1.3	- .3	- .1	+1.5	+ .3	+2.0	- .6
<b>Education:</b>								
Grade School	- .7	- .1	+ .1	-1.2	+ .1	+ .2	+1.0	-3.8
Some High School	-1.8	-1.0	+ .3	-1.1	+ .2	+ .6	- .1	-7.2
High School Grad	-1.2	-1.1	- .5	-1.4	+ .8	- .3	+ .3	-5.4
Some College	- .7	-3.9	- .5	-4.7	- .5	+ .1	+2.0	-8.4
College Grad	+1.1	-6.5	-1.1	-7.7	-2.7	- .7	+2.3	-9.4
Graduate School	+5.0	-2.9	+1.4	-7.6	- .9	-1.5	+3.4	-5.9

\* See footnote on Table 1.

Source: US Bureau of the Census 1992 Survey on Public Participation in the Arts.

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